YALE LAW JOURNAL

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, $2.00 A YEAR SINGLE COPIES, 35 CENTS

Published six times a year, by students of the Yale Law School
P. O. Address, Box 1341, New Haven, Conn.

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SOME hold that the study of statute law leads to a firm belief in an eternal punishment. The defense usually offered—that a finite sin should not be met with an infinite penalty—would be promptly overruled by the judges whose time is largely spent in following into their infinite perplexities the practical results of a fiat of the average legislature. We speak apropos of our leading article on "Slip-shod Legislation." Therein Mr. Bradford calls attention, among other things, to an obscure interval in the legislative process which is of interest. There is an anomalous stage in the growth of an act, between the final vote of the legislature and the appearance of the act in the statute book, during which many strange and curious things occur. Between the moment when the mind of the legislature assents to and leaves a bill, and the time when the court takes it up for interpretation, there is a space in which the integrity of the bill is poorly guarded. The difficulty culminates in court with the question, "Is the law, as it comes before the court, the same as that to which the will of the legislature assented?" and the journal of the house is brought in to prove a change. In the case of *Field* v. *Clark* (143 U. S. 649) it was claimed that a whole clause had been omitted from the engrossed and authenticated act. But the Supreme Court said that the journals of the Houses of Congress could not be introduced to vary or supplement the wording of an act attested by the presiding officers of both Houses, signed by the President, and

deposited in the Department of State. The decision, clearly correct, rested on the inexpediency of making the journal, the hastily made memoranda of a single subordinate officer, the final record of law. And yet, while the journal is unreliable, on the other hand the attestation of an act by the presiding officer is largely formal. He cannot scrutinize, word by word, every act attested by him, and in this particular case, as in others, the uncomfortable suspicion still remains that the law as enforced is not the law as passed, in view of the divergence from the journal. Apparently there is no certain guarantee by the present method that the will of the legislature be expressed on the statute books precisely as it was in the hall of the House. Until some better machinery is devised this annoying uncertainty will exist.

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THE Seniors are just beginning their study of statute law. Mr. Bradford's article is meant not as a deterrent to their zeal, but as one of several foot-notes to be made on such study. Of necessity the work in a law school deals almost exclusively with the common law, and the student unconsciously gets a prejudice against that vague and unknown factor, "the statutes," usually referred to merely in the light of erratic overturners of common-law principles. However much reason there may be in this feeling, it places the young lawyer in a wrong position practically. The briefest survey of the index of the statute book will reveal to him new ideas as to the relative importance of statutes and their all-pervading nature, especially as concerns him in his first practice. He will see scores of subjects, which will enter into his earliest work, which are governed wholly by statute. He will find that many of the puzzles of the common law are therein straightened out, for which he will return thanks; and he will observe that the whole legal atmosphere in which he lives and practices his common-law principles is saturated with statute law.